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. . . . tibi maturos largimur honores
Iurandamque tuum, per numen ponimus aram,
Nil oriturum aliam, nil ortum tale fatentes.

HORATIUS, II. Epist. 1, 15 - 17

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Ai tristi dì, che il popolo
d' Ausonia era stranier nella sua terra,
e per le valli floride
l' urlo correa della fraterna guerra,

salia dello Scaligero
la fosca torre un Grande, e alla corona
volto dell' Alpe, — o Italia,
dice, lassù l' eloquio tuo risuona. —

Nella pupilla d' aquila
ardeva un lampo che di quì non era,
Mentre cingeva d' ignei
fulgori il sole quella fronte austera.

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Poi nella quiete placida
solo raccolto colle sue memorie
l' ire del cor magnanime
riconfortava dell' antiche glorie

Novelle aurore ai secoli
novi dì luce fulgida foriere,
d' eccelse lotte il fremito
e l' incalzar di rintegrate schiere,

sente quell' alma e l' agita;
e sopra il dorso d' una schiatta vile
scaglia l' inesorabile
terzina come colpo di staffile.

Allori e stole e clamidi
e larve vane di virtù che sono?
Sopra l' immane rudere
s' erge del Ver l' intrionfato trono.

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Dall' infernal caligine
pel sospiroso regno all' alma stanza
di sfera in sfera a intendere
ascese la cagion d' ogni sostanza.

Ma un giorno, ahi giorno funebre!
fluttua nero stendardo sul castello
ove Francesca nacque,
e in viso acre dolor sale a Novello.

È il mondo angusto carcere
a chi sdegnoso di più breve lito
su nave ancora fragile
osò correre il mar dell' infinito.

Su stranio suol dell' esule
torna con Bice la grand' alma a Dio
nell' agonie novissime
ancor membrando il caro suol natio.

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Come la selva tacita
Gigante ondeggia all' infuriar dei venti :
così l' audace cantica
passa spronando a libertà le genti

Suona sotto alle cupole
e nei chiostri fatidica parola,
e ad ardue cose accendesi
de' più degni il voler nella sua scola.

Padre i mondi lo nomano
d' ogni forte pensiero e vaga cosa,
e sulla sacra pagina
delle cento cittadi il giuro posa.

O Dante, i lieti pampini
più non calpesta barbaro destriero ;
nè rota sotto ai portici
medioevali l' acciar fulvo guerriero.

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Ma quì il tuo nume, o fulgido
pianeta dell' italico mattino,
e la fè, che in suo conio
nulla inforsa, e il gentil sangue latino

spento veder malignano
gl' iniqui arditi per antico oltraggio ;
— ben stà — dall' Alpe gridano
a voi men prodi in numero il servaggio. –

Eppur quivi le Grazie
sempre amoroso culto ebbero ed ara,
e fra le genti italiche
è nostra fama invidïata e chiara.

O Padre, salve! Vindice
nostro suso in Italia bella oh torna!
T' adergi fiero arcangelo
sui nostri monti ed il flagel ne storna.

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Teco la lotta indomita
noi sosterrem dei padri; e alla contrada
nostra in tuo nome il vomere
fia sacro il core il pensïer la spada.

Se un giorno ai nostri parvoli
suonasse, o Dante, barbaro il tuo verso
morte su noi precipiti,
e il nome nostro in onta sia converso.

Primiero addì 11 ottobre 1896

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